

Age together with the bones of a young person, and surmises that they were placed there to carry the soul of the departed to the "unknown land." He also gives particulars of the bones of other species of birds found along with human remains from the Bronze Age.

31. *Winge on the Birds of the Danish Lighthouses, 1903.*

[Fuglene ved de danske Fyr i 1903. Vidensk. Meddel. fr. d. naturh. Foren. i Kbhvn. 1904, p. 319.]

The twenty-first of these excellent reports relates to the birds obtained at the Danish Lighthouses in 1903, and transmitted to the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen. They were 1138 in number, and are referred to 67 species; they were received from 35 stations, which are carefully enumerated and plainly shown on the accompanying map. The usual notes are given. The most numerous species in the List are *Alauda arvensis* (256 ex.), *Erithacus rubecula* (183 ex.), *Turdus musicus* (73 ex.), and *Sturnus vulgaris* (99 ex.). Of *Regulus cristatus* 33 examples were obtained.

XI.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notices.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors of 'The Ibis'" :—

SIRS,—Mr. Harvie-Brown, in his letter to you of Sept. 1st, 1904 ('Ibis,' 1904, p. 664), criticises my article on nomenclature in connection with Barn-Owls (Bull. B. O. C. xiv. p. 87). I am always willing to accept every criticism so long as I am allowed to defend my own standpoint in return. I therefore venture to ask you to receive this reply to Mr. Harvie-Brown.

I would first wish to point out that Zoological Nomenclature does not stand alone in the world in promoting strife on all points of doubt or innovation. From the earliest historical period every innovation in Philosophy, Physics, Mechanics, Astronomy, Locomotion, Medicine, Surgery, in fact in every branch of human intellectual or

material progress, has been fought and opposed tooth and nail by those who have been brought up in the schools of thought of the previous epochs. Nevertheless, we have always ended by adopting these innovations. So I feel sure it will be with zoologists, when once they have grasped the meaning of the trinomial nomenclature as applied to geographical races. Mr. Harvie-Brown has quite misunderstood the nature of trinomials. He says in effect that the trinomial is justified only so long as it has a "distinctive geographical descriptive power." This is an impossibility, for by far the largest number of trinomially treated forms have been previously described binomially.

Such is the case with my *Aluco flammea nigrescens*, which has been described as *Strix nigrescens* by Lawrence. Such was also the case with *Dendragapus obscurus richardsoni*, which had been described as *Cunace obscurus*, var. *richardsoni*. In both these cases the geographical race had been given a name which no one could be justified in changing into *Aluco flammea dominicensis* or *Dendragapus obscurus montanensis*. The question of calling the forms *Aluco flammea* I., II., III., &c., or *a*, *b*, *c*, &c., is only raising a quibble, and, moreover, a very dangerous quibble; for it is much easier for numbers or letters to be accidentally transposed than quite distinct third names. If, as Mr. Harvie-Brown suggests, we were to add the geographical range and the exact locality to each specimen quoted in print, we should be doing exactly what those who use trinomials avoid, namely, we should be giving a long, many-worded description instead of a short name.

As to the question of different habits of different subspecies, Mr. Harvie-Brown, I fear, has entirely misunderstood the purpose of my instancing the habits of the Robin abroad and in England. But the greatest justification for my calling the English Robin "*Erithacus rubecula melophilus*," instead of the "dark-breasted English form of *Erithacus rubecula*," is that while our indigenous Robins are all *E. r. melophilus* and easily recognisable in the skin or alive, at Brighton and in other south- and east-coast localities continental Robins are

blown across, and so we get in England both *Erithacus rubecula rubecula* and *Erithacus rubecula melophilus*, though the former is purely an accidental visitor.

In conclusion, I only wish once more to urge strongly that the opponents of trinomials, before they criticise and run down those who employ them, should for once seriously consider what trinomials are. The most ardent opponents of trinomials admit every day names such as "*Pelecanus fuscus*, var. *californicus*," but exclaim loudly if an unfortunate writer like myself ventures to leave out the abbreviated word "var." for the sake of brevity, and writes the name of the Western Brown Pelican, *Pelecanus fuscus californicus*.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

Zoological Museum, Tring,
24th October, 1904.

WALTER ROTHSCHILD.

SIRS,—I am now able to give a complete account of the development of Ross's Goose, *Chen rossii* (see 'Ibis,' 1904, p. 73). This season my female laid three eggs, and as in previous years she had proved to be a bad mother, I took the eggs away and put them under a common hen. The period of incubation was 24 days this time, and the eggs were hatched on the 10th of July. All the three eggs were hatched, but, unfortunately, the hen in some way or other killed two of the chicks the same day that they were born. The third escaped this fate and was tenderly cared for by its foster-mother. I have described in detail the colour of the down in a previous letter ('Ibis,' 1903, p. 245), so that it will suffice to say that the chick was a fluffy object with grey down and a bright canary-yellow head.

The little bird grew very rapidly, and when two weeks old was about the size of a Japanese bantam-hen. The bill was still black at this stage with a pink tip (the nail) and the legs were greenish. When three weeks old the feathers began to appear on the shoulders, the flanks, the tail, and the wings. When four weeks old the bird was about the size of a small hen. The body was almost

entirely feathered, but the head and neck were still in down. The legs were bluish and the bill was getting lighter in colour. When five weeks old the whole body was feathered, and when six weeks old even the flight-feathers were of their full length. The first plumage may be described as follows:—

General colour white. A brownish-grey spot on the occiput, which runs down along the back of the neck. The base of the neck and the mantle brownish grey, forming a crescent of that colour, of which the points are turned forward on each side of the base of the neck. The smaller wing-coverts are of the palest brownish grey, with a dark spot at the tip of each feather. The flanks are grey; the large flight-feathers black. The first five secondaries have a dark spot in the centre; those that follow are white, with only a very slight sprinkling of brownish; the three innermost have dark centres, and the white edges are finely spotted with grey. The tail is white, with only a suspicion of a greyish tint on the middle feathers. The legs are greenish grey with pink shining through. The bill is pinkish; the lores are blackish grey, which colour extends over and behind the eyes.

When ten weeks old the bird began to moult, and the grey feathers of the juvenile dress were rapidly replaced by white ones. Also the large tail-feathers were moulted, the central rectrices being dropped first. The legs now began to turn pink in earnest, and the bill assumed its double coloration of a greenish base and a pink tip.

I am, yours &c.,

Gooilust, 'sGraveland, Holland,
October, 1904.

F. E. BLAAUW.

SIRS,—I wish to point out that an unfortunate mistake has occurred in my remarks on the birds of Jamaica ('Ibis,' 1904, p. 577). The Vulture that is so common in the town of Kingston is the red-headed *Cathartes aura*, and not the black-headed *C. atratus*.

I am, yours &c.,

10 Charles Road, St. Leonard's,
October, 1904.

MICHAEL J. NICOLL.

SIRS,—In the last volume of the ‘*The Ibis*’ I find (p. 480) a notice of Dr. Finsch’s departure from the Leyden Museum.

In that article you say that Prof. Schlegel, up to his death in 1882, had catalogued some 18,000 specimens of birds, representing 2300 species, in his ‘*Muséum d’Histoire naturelle des Pays-Bas*,’ but that after that date little was done among the birds until 1898, when Dr. Finsch took up the matter and began a new catalogue, which contains entries of some 13,000 specimens, referable to 3000 species.

It is not my intention to enter upon the question how far a mere manuscript list of genera and species of birds, such as that made by Dr. Finsch, should be placed on the same level as the highly esteemed work done by Prof. Schlegel in his well-known eight volumes of the ‘*Muséum d’Histoire naturelle des Pays-Bas*’; but I cannot help saying that your remark upon the period between 1882 and 1898 is far from courteous to me, who occupied the position of Conservator of the Ornithological Department at the Leyden Museum from 1884 to 1897.

It is true that I have not, like Dr. Finsch, left behind “a Catalogue” with entries of so and so many species and specimens of birds, but nevertheless I should say that the determination, labelling, and arranging of thousands of birds, comprising whole families, which were still in the same state as that in which I left them there in 1897, may have facilitated to some extent the work of Dr. Finsch above alluded to.

I am well aware that you could not be precisely informed about this kind of unpublished work of mine in the Leyden Museum—a work which, it seems to me, is just as valuable as that attributed to Dr. Finsch; but from all that I published in the ‘*Notes from the Leyden Museum*’ during that period (interrupted as it was by my second journey to Liberia and a year’s stay in the Dutch East Indies), you might have concluded that it was not so very little that I did in the Leyden Museum between 1884 and 1897.

Had it not been for the sake of my good name amongst

my colleagues and friends who may read your article, I certainly would not have troubled you with this rectification, for which, however, I feel sure you will not object to allow a little space in the forthcoming number of 'The Ibis.'

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

Rotterdamsche Diergaarde,
Rotterdam,
19th November, 1904.

J. BÜTTIKOFER.

[We much regret to find that the paragraph in question should be construed as involving any depreciation of Dr. Büttikofer, whose excellent work in zoology is known to all of us, and we can assure him that nothing could be farther from our thoughts.—EDD.]

SIRS,—The adoption or non-adoption of the trinomial system is such an important resolve that I would crave space to urge most earnestly that the subject should be studied with the great attention that it deserves. Above all, let existing prejudices be thrown to the winds, for to be conservative on principle, without weighing arguments, is surely unscientific.

In 'The Ibis' for October 1904, Dr. E. Hartert brought forward some strong arguments in favour of the trinomial system; but there is a point on which he did not touch, and on which I should like to make a few remarks.

I have often heard it argued that the trinomial system necessitates finer divisions than the binomial. In reality, however, "fine splitting" is an individuality and is practiced by both trinomialists and binomialists; but whereas the "subspecies" of the trinomialists can be ignored in a general survey of a genus, every fine division of the binomialist has to be considered.

I am sure that soon it will be generally recognised that the binomialist is creating the greatest possible confusion by describing what are nothing more than geographical races

of known species under two names, without making any distinction between these races and well-marked species.

In my opinion, those who cling to two names, and two names only, should describe and name nothing but distinct species and leave geographical races entirely alone; otherwise, if a continuance is made of the practice of naming geographical races just in the same way as full species a knowledge of the true relationship of birds will become an enormous difficulty.

I think it is generally acknowledged that there *are* such things as geographical races, and that it is an advantage to our science that they should be named and described. If so, and if the above-given argument against the practice of naming such races on the binomial system be accepted, what system are we to adopt?

What alternative is there to the trinomial system?

Yours faithfully,

HARRY F. WITHERBY.

Holmehurst,

Burley, New Forest.

November 22nd, 1904.

The South-African Ornithologists' Union.—The first Annual Meeting of the newly constituted "South-African Ornithologists' Union" was held in the Transvaal Museum at Pretoria on October 8th, 1904. In the absence of the President (Mr. W. L. Sclater), Mr. J. Burt Davy, F.L.S., took the Chair. The Hon. Secretary, Mr. Alwin Haagner, read a report, which shewed that, since the inaugural meeting on April 9th (see 'Ibis,' 1904, p. 478), 14 new Members had joined the Union, bringing the total numbers up to 53. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—Mr. W. L. Sclater, *President*; Dr. J. W. B. Gunning and Dr. S. Schönland, *Vice-Presidents*; and Mr. A. K. Haagner, *Secretary*. The name and scope of the proposed new Journal were discussed, but not finally decided upon.

The Antarctic Exhibition.—The Antarctic Exhibition, lately opened at the Bruton Gallery, Bruton Street, Bond Street, is well worthy of a visit from the ornithologist. Besides numerous photographs taken by Engineer-Lieutenant Skelton, who was Chief Engineer of the ‘Discovery’ in the National Antarctic Expedition, it contains the whole series of water-colour drawings made by Dr. Edward Wilson, the Junior Surgeon and Naturalist, who is an accomplished artist, and is especially happy in his sketches of living animals. More than 80 of these sketches illustrate the bird-life of the Antarctic Seas, among which the Emperor Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*) and its smaller associate *Eudyptes adeliæ* are conspicuous.

New Discovery of Dodo’s Bones.—Prof. Newton announces in ‘Nature’ (Oct. 27th, 1904) the discovery by M. Thirioux in Mauritius, about 2½ miles from Port Louis, of a small partly collapsed cave, about 800 feet above the sea-level, containing numerous bones of the Dodo (*Didus ineptus*) and other extirpated birds, such as the Brevipennate Parrot (*Lophopsittacus mauritianus*), the “Poule Rouge” (*Aphanapteryx broeckii*), and the Great Coot (*Fulica newtoni*). Some of the smaller Dodo-bones are of great rarity, and at least one of them (the pygostyle) had not been found before. M. Thirioux has disposed of his very considerable series of these bones to the Museum of Mauritius. Prof. Newton expresses a hope that some competent person may be found to publish a scientific description of this important collection.

The Agaléga Islands.—Some years ago (‘Ibis,’ 1897, p. 145) we ventured to recommend the Agaléga group, in the Indian Ocean south of the Seychelles, as a desirable place for the attention of ornithologists, birds being stated to be very numerous there. We are pleased to observe that the proposed Expedition for the exploration of the Indian Ocean (see Geogr. Journ. vol. xxiv. p. 593) is likely to visit these little-known islands. It will be of great interest

to ascertain whether there are any land-birds in the Agalégas, and we hope that Mr. J. Stanley Gardiner and Mr. Foster Cooper, the Naturalists of the new Expedition, will pay special attention to this point. A series of birds from this remote locality will be much appreciated, as we believe that, as regards ornithology, they are quite a *terra incognita*.

Breeding of the Screamer in Captivity.—Among the ornithological events at the Zoological Society's Gardens last year few were of greater interest than the breeding of the Crested Screamer (*Chauna cristata*), which, so far as I know, is the first instance of this bird nesting in Europe, though it is not an uncommon species in Zoological Gardens, and has been represented in the Regent's Park for many years. Two of these birds, of which the sexes are exactly alike in external appearance, paired in the spring of 1904, and eggs were laid in a large nest, made of loose sticks and placed on the ground in the Great Aviary, on the 17th, 19th, and 21st of May. A fourth egg was supposed to have been laid on the 23rd of May, but the keepers did not see it. Three young only were hatched on July 5th, after an incubation of about six weeks, in which both the male and the female took part. The chicks, which I saw a few days afterwards, were exactly like young geese in appearance and of a buffy white colour. One of them was trodden on and killed by one of its parents the same day that it was hatched, but the other two thrived well, moulted in due course into their full dress, and in October were scarcely distinguishable from adults. It is now still more evident to me that the right position for the Palamedeidae, as maintained by Parker (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1863, p. 411), is in the Order Anseres next to the Anatidae, as they were placed in the Nomencl. Av. Neotr. in 1873.—P. L. S.

The Bewick Collection, Newcastle.—It will interest lovers of British Birds to know that, as we are informed by the 'Museums Journal,' a fine collection of the works of the

famous engraver Thomas Bewick was made accessible at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in August last year. The collection was left to that city by the will of the late Sir J. W. Pease. The city had already a good series of Bewick's works in the Hancock Museum, consisting chiefly of drawings and portraits. But Sir J. W. Pease had gathered together copies of all the books illustrated by Bewick, with some of his best drawings and many engraved blocks and personal relics. These have now all been arranged in connexion with the former collection.

Meeting of the International Ornithological Congress.—The Fourth International Ornithological Congress, under the Presidency of Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, will meet in London on the 12th of June this year, and an Organizing Committee has been formed to make the necessary preparations. The Secretaries to the Committee are Dr. Ernst Hartert, of Tring, and Mr. J. L. Bonhote, of Ditton Hall, Cambridgeshire. The Treasurer is Mr. C. E. Fagan, of the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London. It is arranged that the Congress should sit from Monday, June 12th, to Saturday, June 17th, during which period it is proposed that evening receptions and short excursions shall take place. Longer excursions will be made after the Congress is over for those who are able to remain for them. The Meetings will be held in the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. A General Committee is being formed, consisting of Ornithologists from all parts of the world. All members of the B. O. U. will receive invitations to attend the Congress. Further particulars will be given in our next number.

XII.—*Obituary.*

CARLO, Freiherr von ERLANGER; COMTE AMÉDÉE ALLÉON;
 Captain F. H. SALVIN; and Mr. EDWARD NEALE.

ORNITHOLOGY has sustained a severe loss by the death of Freiherr CARLO VON ERLANGER, who lost his life in a motor-